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Atlantic Realty Companies Submits Mixed-Use Development Application for Falls Church City Center

FALLS CHURCH, VA. – The long-awaited City Center project is moving forward in the City of Falls Church. On Wednesday, Dec. 13 the Atlantic Realty Companies (ARC) submitted an application to the City for a mixed-use development on approximately five acres of land located on the south side of West Broad Street (Route 7), east of the post office, and in the 200 block of South Maple Avenue—the current site of Bowl America. The submittal of ARC’s development application marks the beginning of a public review and approval process that will involve City residents.

“We are pleased that Atlantic Realty has submitted an application to develop a portion of our new City Center. We look forward to learning more details about their proposed development and the benefits it will bring to the City. We look forward to working with Atlantic to develop a project that will bring energy to our downtown and added benefits to our citizens, while continuing the sense of community in Falls Church,” said Mayor Robin S. Gardner.

ARC’s proposal will bring elements the City has been striving for in its downtown commercial district for years, including retail, residential housing, office space, and a hotel. The plan includes a Harris Teeter grocery store; more than 100,000 square feet of new office space on Broad Street; a 180-room hotel; approximately 500 residential apartments that include affordable housing; 67 condominiums structured as age-restricted housing; a new Bowl America bowling facility; and about 1,500 spaces of structured parking, primarily underground. Roughly 40 percent of this phase of City Center will be commercial, 60 percent residential.

ARC estimates the value of the proposed development to be \$280 million. At a tax rate of about \$1 per \$100 of assessed value, the investment would yield about \$2.8 million per year in additional real estate tax revenue for the City. The projected tax revenue does not include personal property, sales, meals, hotel room, and Business, Professional and Occupational Licenses (BPOL) taxes. The proposed grocery store alone could easily generate \$250,000 a year in sales tax for the City.

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“This proposal has the kind of uses that we have sought to bring to this part of the City for many years. It is a very important and welcome step to have Atlantic Realty come forward with this proposal, and we are looking forward to a review and approval process that involves the entire community,” said Acting City Manager Wyatt Shields.

The development application from ARC will trigger an intensive review process by the City to evaluate the project for its consistency with the City’s Comprehensive Plan. In 2005, the City established guiding principles for City Center to make it a “Great Place” in terms of design, density, public space, pedestrian and transportation accessibility, and housing affordability. The City will work closely with the developer and will engage the public throughout the process to make design and structural improvements for public rights of way and public space, such as Big Chimneys Park. Because a portion of the proposed project sits on City-owned land, the terms of the sale of the land will be included as part of the approval process.

“This project has many elements that will energize and create momentum for ongoing investment in the City’s core commercial area,” said Economic Development Director Richard Goff. “This will be a boon for the local office market, putting much needed Class A space where business tenants can support restaurants, retailers, entertainment venues, and find housing options for their employees. The urban model Harris Teeter store is a proven economic engine in Northern Virginia. And, a top-notch hotel will become a hub of activity and an image maker for the City of Falls Church.”

The broader vision for City Center includes about 6 blocks and 22 acres of land between Little Falls Street on the west, North Washington Street on the east, Park Avenue on the north, and Gibson Street on the south. Land availability dictates the first phase of City Center development will occur south of Broad Street.

ARC currently owns George Mason Square, which is the City’s largest complex of leased office space. Through a partnership with Carr Enterprises, ARC is completing the construction of Pearson Square at 400 S. Maple Ave., the largest mixed-use development project in Falls Church.

For more information on City Center, visit www.fallschurchva.gov/government/CityCenter/plan.shtml.

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